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ABSTRACT

About 4,000 new freshmen entered the College Park Campus of the University of Maryland in fall 1973. They had average SAT scores of approximately 493 verbal and 531 math and more than half ranked in the top 25% of their high school graduating classes. About 15% were black, 2% oriental, 2% spanish surnamed, and 1% native American. As part of the freshmen orientation program, more than half of the new students (2407) completed the University Student Census (USC) administered by the Counseling Center. 51% of the USC respondents were females and 49% were males. Some of the results of the USC are as follows: (1) 46% lived with their parents or guardians and 35% lived in a university residence hall; (2) 75% graduated from an academic course of a public high school; (3) 45% had fathers with college degrees; (4) 31% decided on their major in their senior year of high school; (5) 27% thought that studying efficiently would be the hardest part of adjusting to college; (6) 52% thought that the University should use its influence to improve social conditions in the state; and (7) 31% thought ecology/pollution was the most important issue for society to resolve. (Author/PG)

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A PROFILE OF UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK, FRESHMEN 1973-74

Kathleen C. Christensen and William E. Sedlacek

Research Report # 14-73

COUNSELING CENTER
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A PROFILE OF UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK, FRESHMEN 1973-74

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SUMMARY

A description of 2407 freshman responses to a variety of items are presented. Some of the results are noted below:

General Description: 46% (51% males, 42% females) lived with their parents or guardians and 35% (30% males, 39% females) lived in a University residence hall. 59% agreed that the University was their first choice of schools; 28% decided to attend mainly because of its academic programs, 24% because it was relatively inexpensive and 23% because of its geographical location.

Academic Background: 75% graduated from an academic course of a public high school; 45% had fathers with college degrees, 22% had mothers with college degrees.

Educational Vocational Goals: 31% decided on their major in their senior year of high school and 24% were as yet undecided about a major; while 32% were undecided about a vocation. 37% (40% males, 33% females) indicated that developing skills directly appliable to a career was their most important educational objective, while 24% indicated a direction for their career and 11% chose independence in thinking and behavior.

Academic Expectations and Opinions: 27% thought that studying efficiently would be the hardest part of adjusting to college, while 15% said budgeting time and 13% chose selecting a major or career as hardest. 62% (59% males, 65% females) agreed that academic credit should be given for supervised community service.

Non Academic Expectations and Opinions: 52% thought the University should use its influence to improve social conditions in the State and 61% were against de-emphasizing intercollegiate athletics.

Controversial Issues-Opinions: 31% (33% males, 29% females) thought ecology/pollution was the most important issue for society to resolve while 18% (15% males, 21% females) chose racism. 27% (22% males, 31% females) thought the University should recruit black students and 31% (35% males, 29% females) disagreed.

About 4,600 new freshmen entered the College Park Campus of the University of Maryland in fall 1973. They had average (mean) SAT scores of approximately 493 Verbal and 531 Math and more than half ranked in the top 25% of their high school graduating classes. About 15% were Black, 2% Oriental, 2% Spanish surnamed, and 1% Native American.[1]

The College Park campus sponsored an orientation program for incoming students (new and transfer) during the summer, 1973. As part of the orientation, more than half of the new students (N = 2407) completed the University Student Census (USC), administered by the Counseling Center. 51% of the USC respondents were females and 49% were males. Throughout this report, percentages will not add to 100% due to rounding and to students' marking "Other", on some items. Differences between male and female responses can be assumed similar unless specifically reported.

General Description:

95% of the students who completed the USC were not veterans. Of those who indicated they were veterans of the U. S. Armed Forces, the majority were entering the Pharmacy, Nursing, or Math, Physics and Engineering Science Schools.

46% of the incoming students (51% males, 42% females) were living in their parents' or guardian's home during the fall semester. 35% (30% males, 39% females) were living in a University residence hall.

Almost half (48%) of the new students said they felt no pressure to decide on a major, while 28% did feel pressure.

59% of the total sample agreed that the University of Maryland was their first choice of schools. 28% decided to attend mainly because the University offered the kind of academic program they wanted; 24% because it was relatively inexpensive and 23% because of the geographical location. Appreciably smaller percentages of incoming students indicated other reasons: 4% - friends or relatives currently attend; 3% - friends or relatives previously attended; 3% - was not accepted elsewhere; 1% - at suggestion of high school counselor or teacher. 11% indicated "Other".

64% of the sample agreed that they could go to someone in their immediate family for help with a serious problem while 19% disagreed.

Of the incoming students who completed the USC, 38% indicated that they had gotten the most support to attend college from their father, and 26% chose their mother as the strongest supporter. However, there were significant sex differences on responses to this item. Of the students who indicated father, 44% were male while only 32% were female. The direction of difference was reversed on those who responded that their mother gave the most support; 32% were female while only 21% were male.

Students were asked what had contributed most to their own development during the past year. 22% (16% males, 26% females) said friendships made. An additional 22% (24% males, 29% females) said social life, while 15% indicated

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[1] Source: Cultural Study Center

job experience, and 7% (9% males, 6% females) said an individual or independent research study. An additional 6% said their contact with teacher(s) or counselors was most important, while 4% indicated that work with a social or political action group contributed most.

An attempt was made to discover how many students would have a part time job during the academic year and how many hours per week they planned to work. 24% of the students (23% males, 27% females) indicated that they did not have one and did not plan to get one. 22% (21% males, 24% females) did not have one at the time but hoped to find one. Other students already had part time positions and could estimate how many hours per week would be spent working. 9% indicated 1-9 hours; 9% estimated 10-14 hours; 11% predicted 15-19 hours; 10% (11% males, 8% females) said 20-29 hours; 4% estimated 30-39 hours and 4% (6% males, 3% females) predicted they would be working 40 or more hours per week.

2% predicted that their weekly income would be less than $10; 6% estimated they would earn between $10 and $19; 9% thought they would earn between $20 and $29. An additional 9% estimated a weekly income of between $30 and $39. 8% (10% males, 6% females) predicted an amount between $40 and $49; 7% (same for both sexes) predicted between $50 and $75: and another 6% (9% males, 4% females) estimated more than $75 as a weekly income.

Students were asked how far they would be living from campus. Approximately one third (35%; 30% males, 39% females) said they would be living on campus. Almost one fourth (24%; 27% males, 21% females) of the students indicated they would be living between 11 and 50 miles from campus. Other percentages include 14% (15% males, 13% females) who said they would be living within five miles of campus; 14% (15% males, 12% females) who thought they would be commuting from distances of between 6 and 10 miles; 1% from between 51 and 100 miles and another 1% who would be coming to campus from distances of 101 miles or more. 9% (8% males, 11% females) were not sure where they would be living when they completed the USC.

Academic Background - Student and Family:

Students were asked about their secondary school curriculum. 75% (72% males, 77% females) of the students graduated from the college academic course of a public high school. 9% were from the general course of a public high school and 10% graduated from the college academic course of a parochial high school. Much smaller percentages of students had graduated from other types of curricula. With the exception of the academic course-public high school, sex differences were minimal.

An attempt was made to assess the educational background of the new students' parents. 34% of the fathers of the students had received a college degree from another college outside the state, and 22% described their fathers as being high school graduates. However, this percentage was higher for males (23%) than for females (20%). 11% of the sample said their fathers had less than a high school diploma and an additional 11% (10% males, 12% females) indicated their fathers had some college work at another college outside the state. 7% reported that their fathers had a degree from the University of

One third of the students questioned indicated that if they left the University without a degree, the most likely reason would be that they were entering another school. 14% (15% males, 14% females) said they were absolutely certain they would obtain a degree. 9% said they would leave for a good job (11% males, 6% females). 7% predicted marriage would be the most probable cause of their leaving the University. Sex differences in students choosing this option were significant and reflected traditional expectations for women. 12% of the women sampled said marriage would be the most likely reason for their leaving college before receiving a degree while 2% of the men chose this reason.

Students were asked to predict the most likely reason that they would stay at the University until they graduated. 25% (25% males, 26% females) said it would be because a college degree is the only way by which they could enter their chosen job; 20% (24% males, 16% females) said they must have a degree in order to enter graduate or professional school, and 16% (18% males, 14% females) indicated it would be because college graduates get better jobs.

Academic Expectations and Opinions:

Over one fourth (27%) of the students questioned expected that studying efficiently would be the hardest part of adjusting to college; 15% chose budgeting time; 13% said selecting a major field of study and/or a career and 8% thought that the hardest part of college adjustment would be getting to meet and know other students of both sexes.

Students were asked to agree or disagree with the proposal that the University should schedule more classes in the late afternoon and evening hours. 15% of the total sample agreed and 37% disagreed. There were sex differences in the responses to this item. 35% of the male students disagreed while 40% of the female students disagreed.

62% (59% males, 65% females) agreed that academic credit should be given for supervised community service. Only 8% (9% males, 6% females) of the students disagreed with this suggestion.

34% of the students indicated that they expected to get high grades in all their courses. However, there were significant sex differences in response to this item. 39% of the males agreed and 21% disagreed while 29% of the females agreed and 22% disagreed.

Non-Academic Expectations and Opinions:

An effort was made to investigate incoming students' expectations and opinions of several non-academic areas of the University. 36% indicated they already felt a part of the student body. There were sex differences in response to this item. 40% of the males said they felt a part of the student body, while only 32% of the females agreed with this. 17% of the males disagreed but 24% of the females disagreed.

52% of all students sampled (53% males, 50% females) thought the University should use its influence to improve social conditions in the State while 11% disagreed.

Maryland and another 3% said their fathers attended but received no degree. 4% said their fathers had a degree from another college in Maryland. Overall 45% reported they had fathers who had earned a college degree.

Close to half of the students (44%; 47% male, 41% female) indicated that their mothers had a high school diploma. In contrast to the figure reported for their fathers, 17% said their mothers had a college degree from another college outside the state. As mentioned above, 11% of the sample said their fathers had less than a high school diploma. However, only 9% of the students questioned indicated that their mothers had less than a high school diploma. Overall 22% reported they had mothers who had earned a college degree.

Educational-Vocational Goals:

Of the total sample, 31% (33% males, 28% females) indicated that they decided on their major during their senior year of high school; 16% decided during their junior year of high school, and 11% had decided on their major before their freshman year of high school. Almost one fourth (24%) indicated they were as yet undecided.

Along the same lines as above, students were asked when they decided on their present vocational goal. 32% (34% males, 29% females) said they were still undecided. Another 23% said their senior year of high school while 14% (13% males, 16% females) indicated their junior year of high school.

27% said they were somewhat uncertain of their vocational goal at this time in contrast to 29% (28% males, 32% females) who indicated they were quite certain, and 11% (11% males, 12% females) were quite uncertain.

Students were asked to indicate the current educational objective which was of the most importance to them to develop. 37% (40% males, 33% females) said skills directly applicable to a career; 24% indicated a direction for their career or life's work and 11% (9% males, 14% females) said independence in thinking and behavior.

When asked to choose a current educational objective which was the least important for them to develop, 19% (21% males, 17% females) said an interest in and appreciation of the arts and 12% (10% males, 13% females) indicated an ability to express themselves in writing. 31% said their choice of the least important educational objective was not listed.

Another area investigated was students' educational expectations for themselves. 36% expected that the B.A. would be a terminal degree for them. Sex differences in response to this item are striking. 29% of the males saw the B.A. as the highest degree they would achieve in contrast to 42% of the women. Approximately one fourth (23%; 23% males, 26% females) thought they would attend a graduate or professional school for 1 or 2 additional years of schooling; 11% (14% males, 8% females) predicted they would earn an M.D. degree; 10% (11% males, 9% females) expected to eventually earn a Ph.D. or Doctor of Education degree and 5% (7% males, 3% females) predicted that they would earn a Bachelor of Laws degree.

79% (78% males, 80% females) expected that there would be many facilities and opportunities for individual creative activities on campus. Only 4% disagreed.

61% (59% males, 63% females) disagreed that intercollegiate athletics (varsity sports) should be de-emphasized on the campus while 9% (12% males, 8% females) agreed.

Controversial Issues-Opinions:

Attempts were made to assess the opinion of students on several controversial issues. 16% (17% males, 14% females) agreed that demonstrations on controversial issues are a waste of time but 55% disagreed with this.

31% (33% males, 29% females) of the students thought that ecology/pollution was the most important problem for society to resolve; 18% (15% males, 21% females) thought racism was the most important and integrity of those with power was chosen by 11%.

The majority of students questioned (54%) thought the best way for the State to provide higher educational facilities for physically handicapped students was to have special facilities and services on one particular campus. Much smaller percentages of the students questioned thought the State should have minimal special facilities and services at all campuses (15%; 12% males, 17% females) or that the State should be willing to send handicapped students to specially equipped out-of-state schools at state tuition costs (13%).

28% of the total sample thought that women are unaware of career opportunities available to them. However, when the responses are analyzed by sex - differences emerge. 17% of the males agreed with this statement while 39% of the females agreed.

15% of all the students completing the USC said they expected to take a course on women's studies at the University (4% males, 26% females) while 42% disagreed (62% males, 23% females).

Students were asked to respond to the statement that women are more serious students than men. 9% agreed (7% males, 11% females), 40% disagreed. There were larger sex differences among those who disagreed than among those who agreed. 47% of the males disagreed, while only 33% of the females disagreed.

27% (22% males, 31% females) of the students thought the University should actively recruit black students; 31% (35% males, 29% females) disagreed.

18% (13% males, 22% females) said they expected to take a course on black studies sometime while at the University. Large sex differences are revealed among those who disagreed (41%). 50% of the males disagreed compared with 33% of the females.

17% (16% males, 17% females) thought the University should offer a required course on race relations.

Students were asked their opinion on the main reason that there are few black students at the University of Maryland, College Park. 57% (56% males, 59% females) indicated they "didn't know". 20% (22% males, 18% females) said the blacks prefer to go to black colleges. The University's racist practices was chosen by 2% and the University's racist image selected by 6%.

Over one third (36%; 38% males, 35% females) thought the best way for the State of Maryland to provide higher education for blacks and whites was to let things happen naturally with no further program. 19% thought improving the quality of the predominantly black colleges in the state to bring them up to the quality of the University was the best solution. An additional 12% thought that the State should work actively to draw whites to predominantly black colleges and blacks to predominantly white colleges.